543 THE FAIRS at Curtea de Arges are held twice a year, each
527 lasting about a week and ending respectively on August 15th
443 (Assumption) and October 25th (St. Demetri). The association with Christian festivals is a widespread feature (the word "fair" is derived from *ferie*, feast), the fairs attracting the crowds which gather for the festivals. It can sometimes be shown that the time and place of meeting are older than Christianity and that the periodic pagan assemblies later received the sanction of the Church. The fair, at any rate, satisfies a deep peasant instinct for worship, the exchange of goods and social intercourse.

THE AUGUST fair at Curtea corresponds with the early harvests of fruit—especially the plum—and, formerly, with the cereal harvests (buckwheat and millets) which maize replaced. It is probably connected in origin with the Lammas fairs of the West. The first of August, in the ancient Celtic calendar, marked the beginning of autumn and was celebrated as a harvest festival. In Ireland the day is still called Lewy's Fair, and is traditionally associated with the lighting of fires, with games and the making of marriage matches. Lammas fair is the largest of the year in some Irish towns.

THE OCTOBER fair would seem to derive its importance primarily from the return of the stock from the mountain pastures, when cheese and wool and surplus animals can be exchanged. A feature of the October fair is the high proportion of sheep and goats among the stock offered for sale. In the French Alps, too, the autumn stock fairs are the most important of the year. The maize harvest has by this time been gathered even in the Carpathian valleys, where winter sets in early. But whatever the position may once have been, the fairs are now more concerned with goods than with stock.

543 CURTEA FAIR-GROUND is situated on the flood plain, on waste ground kept free of permanent habitations by the danger of spring floods. The scarp leading to the first river-terrace rises steeply behind and is planted with trees which provide
[312] some shelter for peasants and animals. Here, too, under the scarp, is the well which supplies the needs of man and beast.
[496] The main railway—terminus of the line downstream to Pitesti—has extensive sidings on the first terrace immediately behind, while the branch (timber) line to Cumpana runs